



## Utah Comprehensive Counseling and Guidance

### Guidance Activities Results Report (Large Group) 2007-2008

**School:** East Shore High School (Alternative School for Alpine District)

**Target Group:** Whole School

**Target Group selection is based upon:** School Improvement Goal of increasing student credit

obtained.

#### ABSTRACT

The large group project selected for our school this year was a comparative study in presentation methodology. Utilizing the mini-classes taught by our social studies teacher a comparison was made between the amount of credit earned by those taking social studies packets this year and the credit earned by the students last year in social studies. The number of credits earned this year in social studies will be compared with the students from last year to ascertain whether the mini-classes had an impact on passage rates. The results were not what we expected in that per-capita passage was lower in 2008 than it had been in 2007, yet some other interesting numbers did emerge from the study.

#### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

**Introduction:** East Shore is the alternative school for Alpine School District and has been developed around individual packet work combined with the availability of onsite instructors who are present to help the students understand the concepts. The teachers are also responsible for checking the packet completion, any written work or projects, and assigning and correcting the essays. While the teachers are available they are not overly utilized on the teaching/tutoring end and spend most of their time correcting packets and papers.

Students at this school are a varied lot from widely assorted circumstances. Many of them didn't do well in the structure of traditional school and believe initially that this more open approach will be great for them. Sadly they are sometimes the ones who need more structure or at least an adult mentor that can continually motivate them. Traditionally the social studies packets have a reputation for being long and hard with very difficult portfolio assignments. Students often put off the social study packets until the end or try to find other ways (Electronic High School) to complete these credits. Our social studies teacher, Mr. Harper proposed using an hour each morning to teach a class which would have some universal application. Those students who attended the class would be excused from completing one of the portfolio assignments in any social studies packet.

**Participants:** The classes were open to any student interested in going and paying attention for the hour. They were held Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday from 10:00-11:00 AM. After a couple of months the classes had become popular enough that another class was offered later in the day. Participation varied between 25 and 50 students each day. Overall the popularity of the sessions was impressive as more than 2200 students spaces were filled during the first three terms. Most students, once they experienced the classes went multiple times and were exposed to a variety of social studies concepts.

**Method:** The counselor's role in this study was to encourage students to take advantage of the classes so that they wouldn't become discouraged with the portfolio assignments. As the counselors added social studies packets to the student study list they were told about the classes and how the credit worked. Eventually most students knew about the classes and if their schedules permitted tried them.

The lessons presented varied from the development of weaponry throughout time, to map games, to economic principles. The goal of the instructor was to make the lessons broad yet applicable to social studies concepts. Occasionally he gave extra credit assignments that would require some outside research and writing, they weren't utilized very often. Although the classes didn't necessarily match any particular packet portfolio assignment the information was broad enough that it could be used not only in other social studies packets but in business and English packets.

The classes began about one month after the beginning of school and will continue through the end of our school year. In order to get data for this report we collected numbers through the first three terms and compared it to the packets completed in the past school year through the first three terms.

## RESULTS

	2007 part time students	2008 part time students	2007 full time students	2008 full time students
Students who passed a social studies packet	<b>43</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>332</b>
Total S.S. packets passed	<b>125</b>	<b>189</b>	<b>370</b>	<b>623</b>
Credit earned per student	<b>.363</b>	<b>.205</b>	<b>.376</b>	<b>.234</b>

Although the credit per student decreased for both part-time and full-time students in 2008, some other numbers were impressive. The number of students attempting a social studies packet during the year increased by more than double for both groups of students. The number of packets that were completed successfully increased by about 60% in the two groups; this while the population of the school increased less than 6%. Another interesting finding was that most of the students used the classes multiple times. Of the 332 full time students taking social studies packets only 105 individuals sat in on only 1 or 2 classes, the other 227 students attended multiple classes, the average being 6 classes which would have given them enough portfolio credit to pass off 2 packets and earn .25 credit.

## DISUSSION

So although the classes didn't have the desired impact of increasing the passage rate of social studies packets per student some positive effects did result.

- Many more students attempted to pass social studies packets and were exposed to social studies concepts.
- The classes tended to break down the fear of the packets which students previously had.
- Once the students attended a class they were more likely to start a social studies packet.
- Students liked the classes and generally participated in multiple classes.
- The students were presented with social studies and life skills concepts.
- The students had a teacher (in the more traditional sense) who they could connect with.
- Many students were presented with another modality of learning besides the packet style.
- Cohesiveness among the students was created which encouraged students to continue coming to classes.



## Utah Comprehensive Counseling and Guidance

### Closing the Gap Results Report (Small Group) 2007-2008

**School:** East Shore High School (Alternative School for Alpine District)

**Target Group:** A group of about 25 students enrolled in the "Service Corps" class

**Target Group selection is based upon:** This group was the only group that followed a more traditional classroom style of education. The study addresses the school improvement goals.

#### ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to determine the effectiveness of a more traditional classroom setting in the accomplishment to passing off packets for credit. The Service Corps class is a volunteer group of students that applied for acceptance and understood the requirements for retaining membership in the group. The study will compare the amount of credit earned by this group alongside the general population of the school. A quick look at the accumulated credit at the end of each of the first three terms for the two groups will be analyzed. The expectation is that the class type situation along with the volunteer aspect of the participants will result in higher credit earned by the target group. The results met our expectations.

#### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

**Introduction:** East Shore is an alternative school for the district that has developed around individualized packet completion for credit recovery or as a method of getting ahead. The packets vary somewhat in length and difficulty but have four common elements: The packet itself which either presents information or guides the students in the acquisition of knowledge by guiding them through a text. Portfolio assignments which push the students to the application level by having them do projects, write papers, or do research. An essay test designed to encourage better writing; as well as check on their comprehension of the material. And, finally a multiple-choice test to check their comprehension of the packet.

The learning labs in the school are subject based and are each staffed with a teacher and teacher aides to help the students with their packets and to pass off their completed work. The students tend to be a transient group that comes to school when their work schedules or rides allow and stay for various amounts of time. The learning situation for some students can be rather isolated and if they encounter problems they are prone to giving up.

When Mr. Willis, an English teacher and Mr. Hall, our PE/Health teacher started to collaborate about the development of a class type situation which the students would apply to be a part of and would be project based, the administration and we counselors gave it our full support. Their ambitious proposal included using the BYU drama and film departments to get the students to produce and participate in a play and the State Film Festival; training the students to run a marathon; having them do water studies at Utah Lake; and getting them to participate in the "We the People" constitution competition. As the projects were completed the appropriate packets would be passed off and the credit recorded in the school system. We anticipated that passage rates would improve over the general population because of the interest the students would have in the projects and because of the nurturing association they would have with their teachers. We also felt that the socialization of the group would help build some team attitudes that would serve to encourage work.

**Participants:** The members of the class were volunteers, who had to fill out an application for the class, get parental approval, go through an interview with the teachers, and then were selected. Early in the year a cap was set for 30 participants the class quickly filled up and a waiting list was started. The group did not remain as stable and cohesive as anticipated. As the work began some students dropped out and opted for a less demanding schedule. As some problems developed in the class some students were excused or put on probation because they hadn't met the watermarks established by the instructors. In January Mr. Hall got a full time job at BYU and left the school, he was replaced by a couple of teacher aides. As a result of the fluidity of the target group we looked at their progress each quarter.

**Method:** The counseling department was heavily involved with the Service Corps throughout the year. During the recruitment process every student that registered spent time with a counselor and those that we felt would benefit from the Service Corps were referred to the program and given the application form. During the year one counselor, a former government/history teacher taught the class for a couple of hours each week to help them with their government packets. He was also invited to go with them to their 3 day retreat at Clear Creek where he helped with team building exercises and other learning activities. When some students were released from the program the parents came to the counselors hoping for some mediation to get their students back in the program. The counseling department brought in presenters throughout the year to talk about post graduate schooling and career opportunities and used the Service Corps as the target audience, while inviting the rest of the student-body to attend.

The staff utilized to run this group began as two teachers and then evolved into one full time teacher and two teacher aides. They were able to bring in volunteer help from BYU on two extensive programs. Other teachers in the building were also recruited to help them work on specific packets or topics. For example the physics teacher helped them for a few weeks as they developed air-compressed cars. The art teacher helped with a ceramics project that evolved into a small business venture.

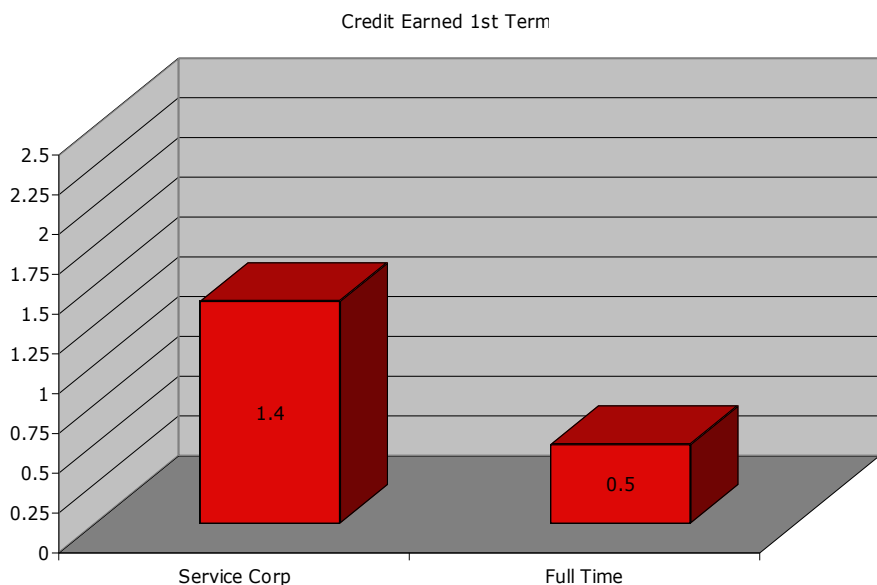
The class began about 3 weeks into the school year and will continue until the end of the year. The proposal to the students was that they could, with diligent effort, complete as many as 10 credits in the year. Sadly most fell short of that goal yet they did achieve at a higher rate than the general population of the school. To measure the progress we simply ran the number of credits earned for the students that were in Service Corps at the end of each of the first three terms and compared them with the credits earned by the general population of full time students.

## RESULTS

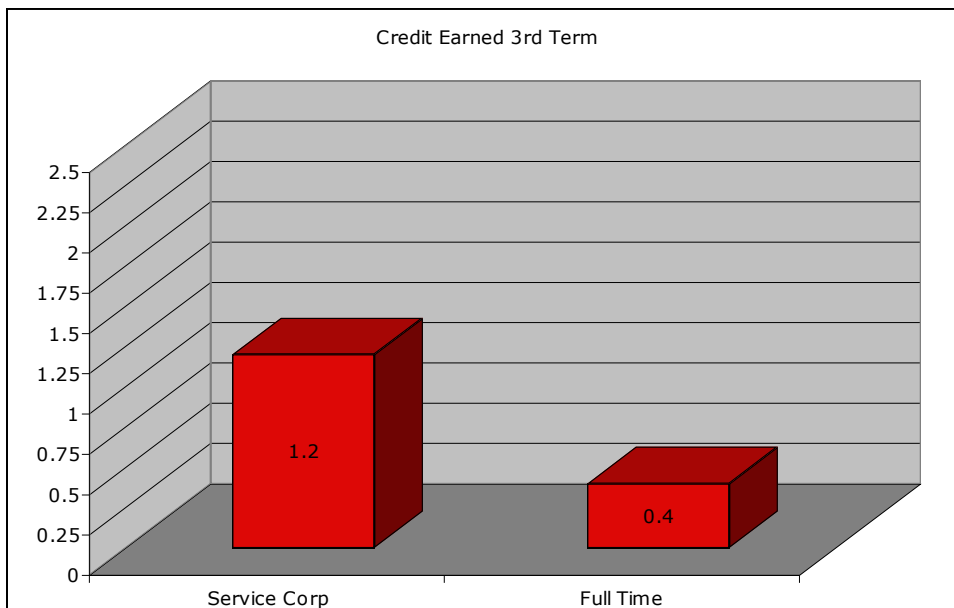
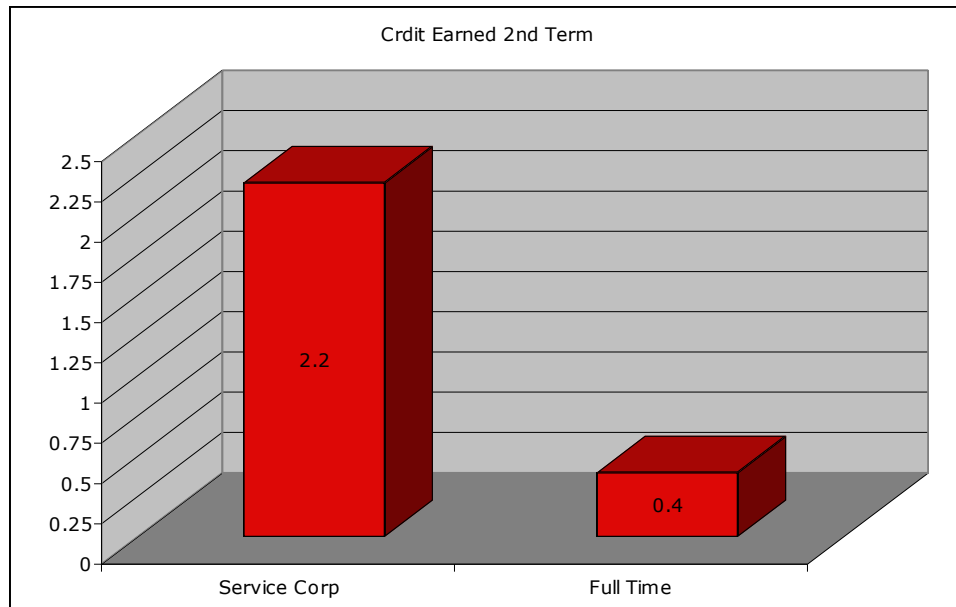
At the conclusion of first term the members of Service Corps had passed an average of 1.4 credits which equates to 12 packets. The general population average was .5 credits or 4 packets.

For second term the Service Corps members had passed 2.2 credits or 18 packets, while the general population actually declined to .4 credits, about 3.5 packets each.

Third term showed the Service Corps members accumulating 1.2 credits, 10 packets while the general population held steady at .4 credits.



These charts compare the average credit earned in our integrated studies program, Service Corp, as compared to our other full time students by term.



## DISUSSION

Although the results of this study matched what we anticipated we recognized that there are a number of other variables to consider: First, the general population of the school, even if it is reduced to the full time students are such a broad and differentiated group that it makes the comparison suspect. Second the various methods and projects used to “cover” for the packets may have created an unfair comparison. In one case while on their retreat the class was read a book by the instructors, while the students listened and read along. Because of their participation they were given credit for a packet. On the other hand the training the students went through to prepare for the marathon and ½ marathon was probably much more intense than what a student in the general population would do for the PE packets.

Besides the increased rate of credit accumulation an added benefit to the Service Corps was the development of a group mentality. Some of the projects really helped them to grow together and begin to care for each other and for the group. The play they wrote and acted in was a great example, it was an interpretive production of the problems they had faced and overcome in their lives. Following the production there were many tears and much hugging as they realized an accomplishment and felt a deeper bond for each other.